

SYNOPSIS

Previously, in The Book of Job...

The Curtain rises in the ancient Land of Uz and on a man named Job. Job was a good man, an honest man, a servant of the Lord, even described as blameless. Job loved God and detested evil. Job was also a wealthy man, measured by his 7,000 heads of sheep and 3,000 camels. He was well known too, in fact the most influential man in all the East! Job was blessed with 7 sons and 3 daughters, and we are told that his was a family that loved to be together, gathered around lavish banquet tables. Yes, life was good for old Job.

In Act 1, a dialogued occurred between God and Satan about this Job fellow. Satan had a theory that Job's devotion and praise were dependent of Job's great abundance and good health. Satan told God that Job would be singing a different tune if he were to lose everything. So God consented to a test of this theory, asking only that Job's life itself be spared. And so, just like that, Job went from the top of the world to absolute rock bottom, in a very dramatic fashion. Lightning bolts struck his sheep, burning them to a crisp, and his children were crushed to death by a house that was swept up in a tornado. Job found himself covered in sores from head to toe, and they bothered him so much that he used a shard of pottery to scrape them as he sat upon his new home, a trash heap. Job suffers greatly, and Job cries out to God.

In Act 2, we met Job's wife and his so-called friends, although perhaps the term "friends" belongs in quotes. That's because the friends are less concerned with Job's suffering than they are what Job must have done to deserve all of this! As they see it, Job is being punished for some transgression. To them, God is a retributive God, a God who blesses or punishes us based on our service or sins. These friends, aren't taking in to account God's ways of grace or God's incomprehensible knowing.

Today, we find ourselves in Act 3, also known as the Divine Speech. After hearing from Job, Job's wife, and Job's friends, we finally get to hear from God! Stay tuned...

CAST

God Yahweh
Satan The Accuser
Job A Good Man
Elihu Self-Described Answerer
Job's Wife Unnamed, Non-supportive
Job's 3 Friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar

SCENES

ACT ONE: OCT 3 Job 1:1, 2:1-10 *The Test*

ACT TWO: OCT 10 Job 23:1-9, 16-17 *With Friends Like These*

ACT THREE: OCT 17 Job 38:1-7 (34-41) *The Divine Speech*

ACT FOUR: OCT 24 Job 42:1-6, 10-17 *What It Is to Be Human*

SUMMARY FOR ACT THREE

Often in our Bible stories, we learn about God by observing God's action. Such as, God delivers God's people out of bondage and slavery in the Book of Exodus. Or, as God so loved the world that God sent God's only begotten son, in John 3:16. Then there are instances in the Bible where we learn about God because of what someone says about God, like the Prophets who wrote of a mighty and righteous God, a lover of justice. Or, like the Psalmist who wrote that God's love endures forever. Today's passage, Job 38:1-7, 34-41, is known as The Divine Speech. In this passage, instead of learning about God through the reports of others, we have the opportunity to learn about God through God's own words.

FOR DEEPER THOUGHT

The Book of Job is believed by many to be the oldest book of the Old Testament dating back to the 6th century B.C.E. This means that people have been telling this story for a very, very long time, nearly 80 generations by some estimates. Though life as we know it has changed in almost every way since those ancient days in Uz, the themes of Job remain timeless. People still look for meaning in suffering, especially in light of our loving and powerful God. In modern times, Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a NY Times best selling book on this very notion, called *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, which he dedicated to his late son, a child who suffered and died of cancer.

When we are in the midst of tragedy and grief, it can take all we have just to make it thru another day. That makes it difficult to look for meaning or find spiritual maturity. However, when time passes, we can often look back onto a crisis and cite new understandings gained from the experience.

- Has this been true for you?
- Can you think of a time when you grew in your relationship with God due to a season of suffering?

In today's passage, we can see just how enormous God is, and yet we can also see the personal relationship God has with Job. God knows Job, and God speaks to Job, in addition to hanging the cosmos and summoning the winds.

- Do you ever experience awe and wonder when you consider God's grandness?
- What about when you consider your own smallness?
- How is this divine ratio at play in your understandings of faith?



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JOB: A STORY FOR THE AGES

JOB

ACT 3



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